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QUÉBEC

submission to the
1966 convention

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Submission to the 1966 convention (LSA/LSO)
R. Brock (Richard F.) March 10, 1966
(Abridged web version)

In recent years, Quebec has been undergoing some of the most startling and significant social and political changes in Canadian history. The key to these unfolding developments — as, indeed of the province's economic and cultural backwardness in the past — is to be found in its national particularity. Just as the roots of that backwardness lie in the subordination and exploitation of the French-Canadian people on a **national** scale, within the Canadian confederation and the North American capitalist structure, so also does the renaissance of French Canada today find its most all-embracing expression in the new wave of national consciousness, which has penetrated in varying degrees all classes of the population, and influenced the course of the struggle as no other factor.

In what sense can we speak of the French-Canadians as a "nation"?

l) They are a historically constituted people; most of the 6,000,000 Canadians of French origin and language are descended from a mere 10,000 French immigrants who settled on the shores of the St. Lawrence River in the 17th and 18th centuries, up to 1760. Since the British Conquest of that year there has been only negligible French-speaking immigration into Canada. During the 19th century, for example, French immigration, numbered less than 200 per year. In recent years, it has averaged around 2500-3000 of a total immigration of 75,000-100,000 annually. In fact, the French-Canadians hold the record for fertility and natural increase of any indigenous ethnic group in the world; since the Conquest, they have increased more than 80-fold. They are one of the most clearly delineated homogeneous nations in the world.

2) They have a common language. Of a total population of I8,238,247 in Canada on the census date June 1, 1961, 3,489,866 or 19.1 per cent spoke French but not English, and a further 2,231,172 or 12.2 per cent reported ability to speak both languages. A majority, 1,666,000 or 75 per cent, of this latter group were French-Canadians.

According to the *Canada Year Book, 1965*:

"There has been little change over the past two or three decades in the relative proportions of the English-speaking, the French-speaking and the bilingual elements in the Canadian population, despite the substantial numbers of postwar immigrants, the large-scale population movements within the country, rising levels of education and other factors that might have been expected to have altered the composition of the population with respect to official language. At each census since 1931, just over two thirds of Canada's population have reported ability to speak English but no French, between 17 and 19 per cent French but not English, and between 12 and 13 per cent ability to speak both languages."

But this would suggest that given the relatively small increase in numbers of French-speaking immigration bilingualism is on the increase among the French, and unilingualism is increasing among the English, while immigrants tend to learn English. This supposition is borne out most remarkably in Montreal; there, between 1940 and 1951, then 1951 and 1961, the number of persons speaking French only has steadily fallen, while the number of bilingual persons and those claiming facility in English only has increased, the last at a considerable rate. That second-generation immigrants in the Montreal area, for example, tend to speak English is clearly shown by a recent study in the Jesuits' magazine, *Relations*:

"...While the number of citizens of British origin is 377,625 in the metropolitan area, 494,667 persons state English as their maternal language, a net increase of 117,042 for the English community: on the other hand, the gain for the French-community is only 12,877, that is, only 12,877 persons give French "as their mother tongue, over and above the number of citizens of French origin."

Nevertheless, while assimilationist pressures are obviously very powerful on the French-Canadians, particularly in the big cities there is no evidence that the French language is on the way way to disappearing as the primary means of communication of the vast majority of the Canadian population of French origin. In Quebec itself, with slightly over 80 per cent of the population of French origin, 62 per cent of the province's citizens can speak only French. (A further 25 per cent claim facility in both languages.)

3) Although the French-Canadians are found in all provinces of Canada**,** the vast majority — over 80 per cent — inhabit the province of Quebec. Historically and politically, Quebec has been considered the "patrie" (fatherland) of French Canada, and is considered such by most French-Canadians outside the province itself, insofar as they retain a national consciousness as French-Canadians, Quebec's "national" character has been recognized, although grossly inadequately, in the Canadian constitution, the British North America Act, through the provisions safeguarding the use of French as an official language in the province. In this centralized Act of Confederation, the allocation to the provinces of jurisdiction in matters concerning "property and civil rights", is primarily attributed to Quebec's distinctive Civil Code (based on the Paris Municipal Code), and its traditional land surveying methods, remnants of its neo-feudal past previous to the Conquest.

Although its economic life is closely integrated with that of North-America and Canada in general, Quebec's disparities in wage and employment levels with neighbouring provinces — Ontario in particular — suggest, as we shall see later, that its economy CAN be distinguished in certain key respects within that general context. Most significant, the very existence of a French-Canadian "national bourgeoisie", small and weak as it is both politically and economically, demonstrates the developed class character and stratification of a French-Canadian nation in the bourgeois sense.

An important terminological distinction must be made, however, between Quebec as the "patrie" of the French Canadian nation, and, on the other hand, the false and all-too-common characterization of Quebec itself as a "nation". The state of Quebec is no more a "nation" than the other nine Canadian provinces constitute a "nation". **French-Canada** is a nation, but that nation includes all French-speaking peoples both within **and without** Quebec's existing borders who consider themselves French-Canadian. Confusion in this connection stems from a bourgeois propensity to arbitrarily claim, "national" identity for the entire political-juridical territory dominated by it, in order to oppress all nationalities within its borders who are in some way distinguished from the politically and economically dominant national group. By denying such a state's multi-national character, the dominant bourgeoisie endeavours to obscure the national character of its exploitation of essentially subject-peoples. Thus while the Canadian bourgeoisie speaks of the "Canadian nation" (a violation of French-Canada's distinct national character) the French-Canadian bourgeoisie has been tempted in reaction to speak of Quebec -- the political unit -- as a 'nation'. But the right of self-determination must mean the right of **all** French-Canadians, including those living in territories bordering Quebec and where they comprise a substantial proportion of the total population, to create a separate state if they so wish.

Nevertheless, it is largely on account of the traditionally recognized and legally incorporated "national" character of Quebec — which is the only Canadian province

where the French out-number the English — that French-Canadians outside Quebec (and not only in New Brunswick where the French total more than 40 per cent of the population), can be considered part of a distinct "nation", and not just another "ethnic minority" like the Ukrainians, or Indians, or Eskimos, etc. *[Note 1]*

The second point is that Quebec is an oppressed nation. One of the aspects of this oppression is the wage level in Quebec, which is 20-30 percent lower than the wage level for comparable work in the rest of the country. Also unemployment rates are much higher than the Canadian average, in fact roughly double the unemployment rates of the neighboring province of Ontario, which is comparable to Quebec in many respects.

Another indication of this oppression can be seen in housing conditions. In a city which is composed of English and French-speaking inhabitants, the slums and the worst areas are all inhabited by the French-speaking Québécois. It shows up in other areas, such as inferior education, inferior facilities, etc.

In contrast to some of the stereotypes you may have learned in school, Quebec is a highly developed capitalist nation like the rest of Canada or the United States.

But at the same time, its economy is overwhelmingly dominated by foreign capital. Roughly 80 percent of the economy is in foreign hands, divided about equally between American investment and investment from English Canada. Investment is concentrated in extractive industries, industries related to processing the extracted resources, and industries which require an abundant supply of cheap labor.

It's a commonplace in Quebec that the bosses are English-speaking and the workers are French-speaking. Foreign capital has destroyed what possibility there was for a native national bourgeoisie to develop. There exists a very small national bourgeoisie, but it is completely tied to foreign capital and subservient to it. The Québécois form a pool of cheap labor, as you can see from the unemployment statistics and the wage rates.

[4--not shown in original]

5) French-Canadians are distinguished by a common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. Although there is an argument in sociological-anthropological circles in Quebec as to whether the traditional values of French-Canada are or were derived from within it's unique rural parish structure, or were simply adaptations of the province's urban culture, all sociologists agree that Quebec has traditionally had a distinct culture — culture being defined as a distinct way of life, outlook on life). It is not a culture directly derived from metropolitan France: French-Canada was more isolated than were possibly even the English-Canadians from the French mother country following the Conquest of 1760. And the increase in national consciousness of French-Canadians, as French-Canadians (or, more commonly, Québécois), in the face of the assimilationist pressures of the North American (and English) mass culture, underlines the continuing importance of their character as a nation.

That French-Canadians as a nation suffer a subordinate position vis-à-vis the English-Canadian nation, and in all walks of life, is beyond contention. The average Quebec

citizen's personal income is only around 87 per cent of that of the average citizen of Canada, and only 68 per cent of that of an Ontario resident. In other words, his standard of living is about 13 per cent inferior to the average Canadian's, and 32 per cent lower than the average Ontario citizen's. The average wage of the Quebec worker is just over 80 per cent that of his Ontario confrere; if restricted to manufacturing, it is 84 per cent of the prevailing Ontario wage. Of the 34 leading manufacturing industries common to both Ontario and Quebec, in only one (the relatively unimportant flour milling and fodder) is the Quebec industry's wage rate higher. The average Quebec farmer reports an annual income of just over $2,000; while the average prairie grain producer earns in the vicinity of $5,000 per year.

Quebec's share of the country's total unemployment has been rising more or less steadily in recent years, until it now stands at a seasonally-adjusted average of around 40 per cent. In Ontario, the comparable rate is 25 per cent, although the latter province's labor force is about 25 per cent greater than Quebec's. Until recently, Quebec's unemployment rate — around 7.5 per cent of its labor force in August 1965 — was second only to that of the economically-depressed Maritimes. According to the latest official figures, it is now the highest.

Nor do French-Canadians in general regardless of social class, enjoy equal opportunity for social mobility (advancement) within our North American capitalist class society. Recent studies have revealed the truth of what was suspected for a long time, that French-Canadians are largely blocked from achieving a significant measure of upward mobility, while the English-Canadians (British element) are increasingly monopolizing prestigious posts in the hierarchy of business and finance. B. R. Blishen, who has constructed an "occupational class scale" based on income and education using Federal government census data for Canada as a whole, has found that the British, with 49.0 per cent of the Canadian population (1951 figures), are under-represented in the two lowest classes, and generally over-represented in successively higher classes. The French, on other hand, with 29.5 per cent of the population, are over-represented in the two lowest classes and generally under-represented in the upper classes.

Using the same basic approach, John Porter has found that for Canada as a whole, the French-Canadians became increasingly under-represented in the professional and financial classes between 1931 and196l, the last year for available statistics. During that same period, in all other classes, they have been moving only very slowly towards the normal distribution, with their over-representation in the primary and unskilled class, for example, dropping only slightly (3.3[%] in l931 to 2.8[%] in 196l). Meanwhile, the British have improved their representation in the professional and financial class while in all other classes they have slowly tended towards the general labor force distribution.

These tendencies are not substantially different within the province of Quebec. Two French-Canadian sociologists (Rocher and De Jocas of Laval University) recently asked themselves if the division of labor between the French and English populations in Quebec was becoming more pronounced than it was 25 years ago. Taking a wide representative sample of 1405 pairs of French- and English-speaking fathers and sons, based on marriage records from the province in 1954, they found that:

"... the discrepancy between the two ethnic groups is far greater for the generation of the sons than it was for the fathers. For the generation of the English-speaking sons, on the other hand, the concentration in the white-collar category is almost twice what it was for the generation of the fathers, while the proportion in the workers' class has decreased. The proportion of the English-speaking in these two categories has been completely reversed between the two generations. On the other hand, within the French group, the proportion in white-collar occupations is greater among the sons than it was among the fathers, while the proportions of the workers' group has scarcely changed. The increase in the white collar group between the two French generations is far from being as important as it is among the English-speaking population.

The weakness — both in absolute and relative terms — of the indigenous French-Canadian capitalist class, is revealed by the fact that only 10 per cent of the Quebec labor force (both English and French) works for French-Canadian employers. Of the over 700 members of the Canadian "economic elite" identified by Porter and other social analysts, only 51 (or *6.7%)* are French-Canadians. (And the number of French-Canadian industrialists is considerably smaller.) In Montreal, which accounts for 42 per cent of Quebec's industrial establishments, 56 per cent of its labor force, and *60%* of its salaries and wages, over 8*0%* of the financial evaluation of local companies is in the hands of "English-speaking" capital interests. Of the 202 men in the highest positions of the federal government administration, only 27(or 13.4 per cent) are French-Canadians.

Why the generally subordinate position of French-Canadians of all classes within the Quebec economy and the Canadian confederative structure? Why is the French Canadian capitalist class — the "national bourgeoisie" — so small and weak, so undeveloped? To what extent and in what ways has Quebec's economic development differed from that of Canada as a whole, and more particularly neighbouring Ontario with which it is so often compared? To what extent are these differences due to the obvious differences in national culture and traditions? These, and other related questions, are the subject of dispute even now among economists, sociologists, anthropologists, etc.

(...)

Paradoxically, this period of relative stagnation economically, witnessed also a very rapid increase in Quebec's population, far in excess of labor demand. Surplus to capital, much of this population participated in the great wave of "colonization" in the frontier regions of Quebec. This settlement of the labor surplus on the land was rationalized in nationalist terms: to "emparons-nous du sol" was added, "C'est le meilleur moyen de conserver notre nationalité. *(It's the best way to preserve our nationality" --and our religion, as the Catholic church promoted this stillborn diversion of the Québécois' destiny – Web Ed.)* Insofar as it was surplus to the land as well as capital, the French-Canadian population tended to emigrate in large numbers to the New England states, to replace the considerable U.S. emigration toward the heavy industry of the East-Central states. More than half a million French-Canadians left Quebec for New England in the second half of the nineteenth century,

After 1900, however, according to the Faucher-Lamontagne thesis, Quebec's economy entered a distinctly new era, during which it became definitively integrated with the North American system, and based upon the resource pattern of the entire continent. At the origin of this fundamental change were three factors: 1) the depletion of certain resources and the insufficient availability of other factors in the United States, most notably, pulpwood, copper and iron, 2) the development and use of new metals through changes in the pattern of technology and industry—e.g. Just as railroads had depended upon steel, so the new aircraft industry required aluminum, which in tern required large quantities of hydro-electric power, for which Quebec was

particularly suited, 3) coal receded from its first position as a source of power, and water became a cheaper substitute.

From all these changes, Quebec with 80% of its surface Precambrian shield, was able to benefit. It had both the water-power and the mineral resources.

The results are readily apparent from few statistics. By 1920, agriculture accounted for only 37% of Quebec's annual production, while manufacturing was already ahead with 38%. Forests contributed 15%, construction, 4%, and mining, 3%. By 1941, the agricultural sector contributed only 10% of Quebec's production, manufacturing 64%, forestry 11%, and mining 9%. The bulk of the increase in manufacturing production was registered in electrical apparatus, transportation equipment, wood products, iron and steel, pulp and paper, and primary textiles industries.

Faucher and Lamontagne draw particular attention to two relevant characteristics of this new wave of industrial development: first, that "while the development of southern Ontario had been a mere counterpart of American industrialization, Quebec's new growth was designed to complement it, " and "secondly, that the industrial expansion of Quebec after 1900 consisted of a combination of the old system of labor-oriented industries with the new heavily-capitalized industries.*["]* The implications of this essentially bi-compartmentalized economy are examined in greater detail below.

A large part of the new capital investment came, of course, from American sources. Although up to 1900, only 25 U.S. firms had established branches in Quebec, it is estimated that U.S. capital interests accounted for 43 per cent of the investments in new facilities between 1900 and 1915. By 1934, one-third of the total capital invested in Quebec was American. This trend was enormously strengthened after the Second World War.

(....)

The most serious and profound study of the Quebec economy to this point is that of Prof. André Raynauld of the University of Montreal, *in Croissance et Structure Economiques de la Province de Québec)* holds French-Canada's rate of economic development has always been consistent with that of Canada as a whole, at least since Confederation, one thing is certain: that when Canada's industrial revolution did begin in earnest — between 1896 and 1913 — French-Canadians did not have the capital to compete with the already well-established American interests. The introduction of large scale industry in Quebec as elsewhere in Canada, was financed and managed by American capital. But while the English-Canadian bourgeoisie, which had already established a powerful base for itself during the preceding period through it's ownership of leading industries, and its control of the central state apparatus -- hence, tariff policy, etc. -- was able to negotiate for itself a more or less favored position in that development, the French-Canadian bourgeoisie, with no state of its own, hence no real political power to legislate tariffs, banking policy, etc., could survive only insofar as it collaborated with this cabal of American and English-Canadian capitalist interests. It could not play a viable independent role. The extent of this situation is vividly described by Philippe Garigue of the University of Montreal:

"One of the first results of the growth of industrialization was the disappearance of certain economic activities hitherto controlled by French-Canadians. The individual enterprise, which has allowed them to take control over a certain part of the Province's economic activities, fell apart on account of the growing importance of limited corporations and monopolies controlled by other ethnic groups. The concentration or quasi-concentration in the new industries of gas, automobile parts, iron, aluminum, cement, petroleum, pulp and paper, is only the best-known demonstration of the replacement of French-Canadians in the leadership of

economic activities. In some of the most recent industries, such as electrical goods and certain chemical products, where the enterprise has passed directly from the laboratory stage to that of big industry, French-Canadians were completely excluded from management right from the beginning. The structure of business relations established in the Province of Quebec during the period of "withdrawal" was transformed, particularly with regard to labor-management relations. For example, in 1955 close to 90 per cent of the Quebec labor force worked for incorporated enterprises, and only 6.4% for single-proprietor firms. Not only is the management of these incorporated firms in the majority English, but as a result, the vast majority of French-Canadians work in an English-speaking milieu." (CJEPS, May/62, vol. XXVIII, #2., P. Garigue -- Organisation Sociale et valeur culturelles canadiens-français.)

As a "nation", French Canadians have never had control over all aspects of their political and economic life. The French-Canadian bourgeoisie never carried out a successful bourgeois revolution establishing their absolute political control over their own state. In fact, they were politically forestalled in this by the more developed English-Canadian bourgeoisie, enjoying the support of British imperialism, for whom Confederation in 1867 was the means of commercially unifying, widening and protecting the colonial-market, and overcoming the political paralysis resulting from the Legislative Union of 1840. 1867 confined the French-Canadians to Quebec, but stripped their national capitalist class of effective economic and political power as a class. The Canadian state, and its central government, Ottawa, which is the concrete expression of the political domination of the-French-Canadian nation by the English-Canadian capitalist class, controls all the key powers, essential to any developed capitalist state — defense, treaty-making, immigration, money and banking, tariffs and commerce, etc. and while confederation assured the political subordination of the French-Canadian bourgeoisie, the massive industrialization of the early twentieth century, under the control of foreign capital, completed the process economically.

(...)

In short, Quebec's economy has not developed as a "national" economy, but rather as subsidiary part of the North American economy, with the locus of management decisions not in Quebec City, or even Montreal, but in the board rooms of corporations in the U.S. and Toronto. The weakness of the French-Canadian bourgeoisie as a class is the key **structural** factor behind the relatively low wages, high unemployment levels, and general unevenness of economic development of Quebec. Consequently, while the growth of Quebec's economy has historically been a function of Ontario's, its development by sectors has not proceeded along completely parallel lines.

The major difference between the development of Ontario's and Quebec's manufacturing industry appears in the latter's relative concentration on natural resources.

(...)

But since 1935, and particularly since the Second World War, Quebec's increase in production in the secondary "sector (5.3% by 1955) has been far surpassed by that of Ontario (9.5%). Furthermore, excluding agriculture (where production decreased 6.1% in both provinces), primary sector production in Quebec decreased only 0.2% between 1935 and 1955, while in Ontario it decreased by 6.5%. (…) Economists of the Quebec government now *[1966 --Ed.]* estimate that durable goods account for 62% of manufacturing production in Ontario, while they account for only 38% of factory output in Quebec. (...)

(end of Part 1 of 3)

[1] Note by the Wed Ed.: Further elucidation on the Marxist criteria of what constitutes a "nation" – beyond today's formal division of the planet into legally recognized States, is

contained in a 1971 pamphlet [on this website] by A. Young: "Quebec Nationalism: It's Roots and Meaning:"

"...To begin, I should mention some background information on Quebec. Those who live in Quebec are called the Québécois. There are about six million Québécois out of a population of some 21 million Canadians — about 30 percent of the Canadian population. They live in one geographical area, the province of Quebec, geographically a large proportion of the country.

The Québécois have had a provincial government, roughly comparable to a state government in the U.S., for several hundred years. The Quebec government deals with many local and limited matters and its spokesmen are Québécois.

This has given the Quebec struggle some unique characteristics. In contrast with the Black struggle in the U.S., there is a well-defined area in which the Quebec nation lives and the proportion of the Québécois in the total Canadian population is much higher. So the Quebec struggle occupies a tremendous strategic position in the whole social struggle in Canada.

The first point to understand is that the Québécois form a nation. Very few people dispute this fact. In contrast to the Black nationality in the United States, the Québécois have all the classical characteristics of a nation which Lenin outlined — sharing a common language, common culture, common history, and a geographical entity which is their homeland. The Québécois consider themselves a nation, and have a well-developed national consciousness."

QUEBEC by R. Brock (D.F.)

(Part 2 of 3, from original mimeo'd 1966 LSO document)

This specialization clearly works to Ontario's advantage. For it follows, from the above, that Quebec has experienced its greatest expansion in precisely that sector of secondary industry which is declining in importance in the ensemble of the two economies, and whose distribution is becoming more evenly spread between the two provinces. Quebec suffers from Ontario's growing self-sufficiency in the consumers' non-durable goods sector.

The implications of this trend were starkly revealed in a report in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* of January 5, 1966:

"Industrial investment generally... is falling below the ambitious growth targets set by the Quebec Government. Proposed spending on factory construction in the province this year was $102,000,000, less than half of the $218,000,000 invested in Ontario factory construction. As a proportion of the Ontario figure, investment in Quebec plants has been falling steadily: it was 60 per cent in 1961, 56 per cent in 1962, 53 per cent in 1963, 54 per cent in 1964 and a forecast 47 per cent in 1965.

"Manufacturers' shipments in Quebec have shown a similar trend, falling steadily from 6l per cent of Ontario output in 1961 to 54 per cent in the first nine months of 1965. As a proportion of total Canadian factory shipments, the Quebec share has dropped from 30 per cent to 28 per cent.

"Quebec's relative loss of position is a result principally of the much greater expansion in demand for durable goods... that are produced chiefly in Ontario, than in demand for non-durables... which are relatively more important in Quebec's industrial structure. **This is a typical pattern of demand during the expansion phase of the business cycle."** (emphasis ours --[RF])

But if Quebec is not sharing in a period of general prosperity, its economic situation is even less likely to prosper in conditions of recession. The province is two and one-half times more dependent on exterior (extra provincial) export and import trade (including that with other provinces) than is Canada, i.e. while Canada's exports amount to about 25 per cent of its total domestic product, the comparable figure for Quebec is approximately 65 per cent. That is, well over half of Quebec's national revenue depends on its exports of goods and services — mostly raw materials and semifinished goods in the extractive industries — outside its borders, mainly in return for imports of finished (durable) goods.

Almost 46 per cent of Quebec's manufacturing production is exported from the province, and only 30 per cent is disposed of among other manufacturing industries operating within the province. (About 44 per cent of Canadian production, by contrast, is disposed of among Canadian firms in the secondary sector.) This ratio is even more pronounced in the extractive industries: about three-fourths of natural resources products are exported from the province.

Two, exports — paper and primary metal products — alone account for 70.6 per cent of all Quebec manufacturing exports to points outside the province. Seven major industrial groups sell the bulk of their production to other Canadian provinces. These are tobacco, rubber, leather, clothing, machinery, transportation equipment, and electrical appliances. Whole areas of the

province are dependent upon foreign market conditions. Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean exports 62.8 per cent of all its production to points outside Quebec: North Shore-New Quebec, 66.2 per cent of its production; Ottawa region, 44.2 per cent; St-Maurice, 38.5 per cent, etc. These are, of course, the regions dominated by one or two major industries producing for export.

Despite this preponderance in those regions, Montreal still accounts for the vast majority of the export industries. For example, sales of goods produced in Montreal region account for 66. 3 per cent of total sales of Quebec's manufactured goods to other Canadian provinces, and 30 per cent of its sales to markets outside Canada. But Montreal is not nearly as dependent upon the export industry, for only 8 per cent of the city's total manufacturing production (including production for the Quebec market) is exported. Thus it is clear that production for the domestic market is also heavily centred in Montreal. Which is — simply another demonstration of that city's tremendous commercial, financial and industrial preponderance in the Quebec economy — a preponderance which is steadily growing. The vast majority of new manufacturing firms recorded each year by the provincial Industrial Bureau (Commissariat Industriel) locate in the city or its immediate vicinity.

Montreal's share of the province's population has grown from 29 percent in 1911 to 36.4 per cent in 1956, and in recent years has spurted ahead to the present level, of over 40 per cent. Its population of about *2.5* million is expected, according to recent estimates, to increase by 56.5 per cent to 3,600,000 in 1971 and soar 108.7 per cent to 4,800,000 in 1981. These growth rates, compare with predictions for the entire country of 19.2 and 59.3 per cent for the years in question. In fifteen years, nearly half of Quebec's population will be centred in this city. (Toronto, by contrast, accounts for only 21 per cent of the manufacturing labor-force in Ontario.)

The geographical-localization and concentration of the labor-force in Quebec is also another factor behind lower wage rates: the work-force in the Montreal region alone is as large as that of close to 30 of the biggest population centres of Ontario taken together.

The paradox of the "Quiet Revolution" is that the increasing integration of Quebec's economic, political, and social life into the North American environment has given rise to a new powerful nationialist consciousness shared in varying degrees by all classes of the French-Canadian population. It is difficult if not impossible to accurately gauge the profundity of this consciousness. One of the few attempts to do so was the survey on separatism on a province-wide level conducted by Le Groupe de Recherche Social, reported in *Maclean's Magazine* and *Le Magazine Maclean* of November 1963. Although over two years old now, the principal results are worth summarizing. The researchers found that 13 per cent of French-Canadians in Quebec were in favor of immediate separation from Canada, and 20 per cent said they would vote for separation. 45 per cent were clearly of the opinion that the federal government "favored the English." Only 43 per cent definitely opposed separatism. The survey noted that separatist support was directly proportional to income and education: one of every four professionals and students was a separatist, as were 25 per cent of persons earning an income of $6,000 per year or more. 16 per cent of unskilled workers supported separatism, 12 per cent of skilled workers and only 8 per cent of farmers. 16 per cent of Montreal French were separatists, (as) were 11 per cent of those living outside the city. Opinion on the question tended to be more and more polarized: while 69% of the anti-separatists reported becoming firmer in their opposition, the trend among the "undecided" was clearly to opt increasingly in favor of separatism.

Unfortunately, that survey was confined simply to a measure of support for separatism, admittedly the most extreme and unalloyed manifestation of nationalist sentiment. A more useful study would be one on national consciousness. This has yet to be done. Nevertheless the *Maclean's*-sponsored survey gave an indication of the profundity of nationalist consciousness among the different social classes in 1963. And a later survey carried out by the same group of sociologists, and reported in *Le Magazine Maclean* of June 1964, shed further light on the subject.

The results of this survey, designed to poll Canadian sentiment regarding annexation to the United States, showed 33 per cent of the Quebec population (including, presumably, the English-speaking element) in favor of *political* annexation. (The comparable percentages for other regions were: Maritimes, 39 per cent, Ontario, 24 per cent; Prairies and British Columbia, 29% per cent.) Only 38 per cent of the Québécois were strongly opposed to political annexation. 78 per cent of the Québécois — the highest proportion for any region -- favored **economic** union with the United States. Only 15 per cent were opposed. This, despite the fact that 46 per cent of Québécois considered the "American way of life" significantly different from their own. Unfortunately, this probe of annexation sentiment did not break down the results according to social class, or even income divisions within the population.

These surveys taken together suggest that comparatively few French Canadians have a national consciousness as "Canadians" *(i.e., pan-Canadian consciousness, English and French speakers together sea-to-sea, while most Québécois widely self-identify as the original occupants of Canada, "les Canadiens" -- their pro hockey team known as "le (club) canadien" -- Ed.).* Almost half of them are aware of active discrimination against them on the part of the federal regime. An increasingly large number are alienated from pan-Canadian politics, and there is more and more a tendency to identify oneself primarily as a "Québécois". The voting results in the last federal election (November 8/65) in some ways bear this out: While close to 80 per cent of eligible English-Canadian electors voted, only slightly over 60 per cent of French-Canadians bothered to cast their ballots — a difference of almost 20 per cent. This tendency was particularly marked in Montreal; in some working class ridings fewer than half the electors voted. In fact, the relatively low Canadian polling results may be attributed mainly to Quebec's remarkably low participation.

However, as the June/64 opinion poll suggests, separatist sentiment may not be as deeply rooted throughout the population as is often assumed. It would seem that the vast majority of French-Canadians see their economic future firmly integrated within the North American context, despite the widely recognized cultural differences. For the majority of French-Canadians, their "nationalism" would appear to be conditioned by — in large part, derived from -- the desire for a higher material standard of living *(and recognition of their status as a founding nation within Confederation and demand for re-establishing the French language as the language of work and education -- Ed.)* Certainly, these surveys severely shake the remnants of that mythology which envisions the sturdy Québécois, bulwark of "Canada's national identity", clinging tenaciously to the "'traditional", "rural", "Quebec way of life". At least one Quebec sociologist, Philippe Garigue, has even suggested that French-Canadians never had a defined rural ideology, but instead always adopted the prevailing mores and values of the town and cities. "Whatever the case, they seem not the least bit loath to reject the old traditions and adapt to the new.

'What is behind the recent growth of national consciousness among French-Canadians?

Contrary to a widely-shared hypothesis, the new nationalism is not due to an exceptional increase in Quebec's rate of industrialization and, consequently, proletarian*(ized)* nation. For, as we have seen, the province's economic growth, in terms both of production and scale of manufacturing operations, has not differed markedly from that of neighbouring Ontario, although the relative concentation of Quebec workers in large-scale enterprises has no doubt had some effect in encouraging a faster tempo in the growth of their class consciousness in recent years *(this Québécois working class being new to its status as wage labor and thus less restrained in its struggles -- witness the recurring "general strikes," plant takeovers and radical union federation "manifestos" of recent years -- Ed.)*

Nor does the growth in national consciousness originate principally in an exceptionally high and recent rate of urbanization with resulting drastic jumps in the social (class) consciousness

of newly urbanized masses. Ih fact, the rural-urban ratio of Quebec's population has remained throughout this century quite consistent with that for Ontario and Canada as a whole. The province has always been **more urbanized** than Canada; and in the censuses of 1931 and 1941, it was more urbanized than Ontario. In fact, a majority of Quebec's population has been urban since shortly after 1911; that of Ontario, since shortly before 1911. In recent years — since 1951 —Quebec's urban population has increased at an almost identical rate with that of Ontario, increasing 45.0 per cent by I96I, while the latter province's population augmented by 46.4 per cent. But, during the same period, Quebec's rural population **declined** slightly (particularly since 1956) while Ontario's rural population grew by 6 per cent over the ten-year period, declining by only one-half of one per cent between 1956 and 1961. (Canada's rural population, during this period, grew slightly, by 1.4 per.cent.)

According to 1961 statistics, 74.3 per cent of the Quebec population lived in towns of over 1000 inhabitants, compared to 69.6 per cent of the Canadian population, and 77.3 per cent of Ontario's citizens. Clearly, there must be other factors to explain the recent growth in nationalist consciousness among French-Canadians.

It seems clear that the essential ingredient, in the new French-Canadian nationalism is a growing, profound awareness of the values of industrialized society coupled with an equally profound consciousness of their lack of opportunity, as a nation, to partake fully of the fruits of this civilization. As might be expected, this nationalist consciousness is strongest among those layers of the population who are most conscious of being "blocked" from promotion in business and industry because they are French. It is no coincidence that the new nationalism is, strongest among the students— the most socially mobile sector of the population, as well as among the liberal and technical professions. *(Emphasis by the web Ed.)*

In fact, the upsurge in nationalism (and separatist support) in French Canada in recent years is more than anything, due to the increasing importance of French-Canadians in the "middle-class" — managerial, technical and professional — occupations. Census data reveals that for example the number of French-Canadians between 1951 and 1961 in the proprietary and managerial occupations increased by 79 per cent; in the professional and highly-skilled technical occupations, by 60 per cent; in clerical and sales occupations, by 69 per cent. This growth is tending to accelerate with time: between 1955 and 1965, the number of French-Canadians in the liberal and technical professions has increased by 98 per cent in Quebec. During the same period, of course, the "British" element in the Canadian population registered an even greater increase in its "middle-class" representation. Between 1951 and 1961 it increased by 68 per cent in professional and highly-skilled technical occupations, by 81 per cent in proprietary and managerial occupations, and by 84 per cent among clerical and sales personnel. But the important factor here is not the French-Canadians' failure to register an increase in their representation in these occupations commensurate with that of the English-Canadians, but rather, their **absolute** increase in those occupational categories.

In a study entitled "Quebec's Emerging Middle Class," Prof. Jacques Brazeau has shown the significance of this development in the light of Quebec's previous record. Back in 1931, census figures showing the proportion of the population between the ages of 15 and 24 attending classes beyond grade 8 revealed the following: on a regional basis: B.C. 59 per cent, Ontario, 51 per cent, the Prairies, 49 per cent, Canada as a whole, 43 per cent, the Maritimes, 38 per cent, and **Quebec 29 per cent** (including the English, who undoubtedly attended school in proportions beyond the national average.)

However, between 1950 and 1960, the proportion attending school passed from 53 per cent to 62 per cent of the-population between 5 and 24 years of age in Quebec: attendance more than doubled in grades 9 to 12, and increased beyond grade 12 by more than 50 per cent. A survey conducted among university students by Brazeau in collaboration with others in 1962 revealed that

only 17 per cent of the new student influx came from "middle class" families ("category of professionals and executives'"), 36 per cent from families where the wage-earner was in a semi-professional occupation, in a small business, or in a white-collar job, 31 per cent from "working class families", and 11 per cent from farm families. Nearly half the fathers of the students had not gone past grade 7 in school, and only 12 per cent had completed their college education. Brazeau concludes that a "new middle class" is currently being formed in French Canada, which is "overflowing" the traditional "reserves" of French-Canadians in the provincial and municipal administrations, and their liaison positions within Quebec's corporate enterprises.

More than anything else, it is this rapid growth in the technical and professional occupations and instruction, that has sparked the present ferment in Quebec. Hitherto, the French-Canadian middle classes tended to orient almost entirely toward two orders of society — the religious and political-administrative — for it was only there that they enjoyed a high degree of social mobility, that is a proportionate superiority of members over the British element). The religious hierarchy absorbed a certain part of the surplus male and female labor force from farming families; the provincial civil service and political machines, whether "rouge" or "bleu", were entirely staffed and patronized by the French-Canadian "elites". It was these middle-class "elites" which traditionally have formulated the leading themes and ideology of French-Canadian culture. Those who entered English business and industry tended to become "anglicized"; but insofar as they accepted the cultural values of North American capitalism, they rejected, and were rejected by, their fellow nationals.

These French-Canadian middle class elites themselves reflected the crushed aspirations and defeatist ideology of the backward marginal bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie was always most concerned with the preservation of the individualistic frugal economic features of the old habitant way of life. It could hardly be otherwise — as the American sociologist E. C. Hughes has pointed out (in *French Canada In Transition*). There is a very close economic and sociological correlation of the small-scale urban family enterprise with the traditional ideal of the family farm: "The chief features of the economic life of the habitant persist and operate with effectiveness not so much among the more recent and rustic townspeople, who came directly from farm to factory, as among the French-Canadian business and professional classes who, generally speaking, are not of recent rural origin.. The family enterprise is indeed thought of as the foundation of the French-Canadian middle class." (pp 172-3).

The old, essentially defensive nationalism of these elites, which sought in the past to preserve inviolate, a relatively static agrarian-oriented society, could at times assume a radical "anti-capitalist" expression. Among the French-Canadian petite-bourgeoisie this "radicalism" could be quite pronounced. For unlike the "big" French-Canadian bourgeoisie which is dependent on a large measure of collaboration with foreign capital for its existence, the small businessmen, and shop-keepers, as well as the poor farmers of Quebec are the victims of capitalist monopoly which increasingly threatens to liquidate them as a class. But their rejection of (English) capitalism was often little more than a rejection of industrialization, which they saw as the root cause of their own weakness, and the rapidly escalating proletarianization of the individualistic habitant. It is this obscurantist anti-capitalism that lies at the base of the Ralliement des Créditistes' radical stances (Similarly, le Ralliement's radicalism on some international issues, which differs markedly from those of the reactionary English-Canadian Social Credit leadership, are fundamentally a demagogic expression not of socialist sympathies, but rather of more traditional Quebec isolationism, and as such yet another example of the superficial character of much of the old nationalist "radicalism".)

In many ways, this reactionary defensive nationalism contributed to create a unique type of cultural lag in Quebec. Despite the influx of uprooted rural population into the industrialized cities, the dominant expressed values of French-Canadian society continued until recently to be those of the rural parish. The most notable consequence of the lag in consciousnes

resulting from the continued maintenance of the mores of folk society is to be seen in the chronic over-population of Quebec, which has continued up to the present day. (The average Quebec family now however, is only 4.2 persons —well behind Newfoundland and New Brunswick.)

However, the recent high rate of growth in absolute numbers of the French-Canadian middle classes has brought whole new layers of the population face to face with the fact of their relative lack of mobility within the English-dominated business industry, and even technical professions. Many sections of the new "elites" find themselves increasingly "proletarianized": in relation to the means of production, they are scarcely
better off than the average skilled industrial worker. Consider, for example, the engineers, whose number has increased rapidly from the 1,500 registered in Quebec in 1944. By 1949 there were 3,800; by 1959, 8,800; and by 1963, 12,000, 95 per cent of them grouped in 75 enterprises. As far back as 1951, of the more than 2700 engineers in Montreal, fewer than 900 were French-Canadian. But most of the increase has been French. According to recent wage figures, the average salary of these engineers, after five years of university, is almost exactly the same as that of a technician without university training.

These professional strata, blocked from accession to management in English firms where they work, have of late tended more and more to turn to the organized labor movement for protection of their interests. A 1arge part of the recent increase in trade union membership in Quebec is due to the influx of "intellectual workers" into the movement, whether through abandonment, dissolution, or conversion of their non-union (or sometimes anti-union), professional associations. So far unionization of these elements has proceeded only in French-Canadian enterprises — that is, among those who have **opted** to work in French— notably in the civil service (e.g., teachers, Hydro-Québec engineers, etc.). For this organization campaign to take in the French-Canadian engineers in English-dominated firms, where English engineers — who naturally identify more closely with management — are in the majority, presumes a polarization of the professional personnel along national lines, which the general political climate doesn't (yet) allow.

The greater degree of politicization among the newly-organized professional strata — a political consciousness stemming from their more acute national consciousness, as well as the fact that in most cases, their boss is the "establishment", whether provincial (engineers) or municipal (school teachers) — has ironically created a situation where, in a society heavily influenced by tradition with a corporatist outlook the extension of trade union organizational forms to the "middle classes" has led as we shall see below not to a conservatization, but a **radicalization** of the trade union movement. In this sense, the new nationalist consciousness in French Caanda, far from cutting across class lines, and obscuring the fundamental class character of the workers' struggle, rather gives shape and expression to that struggle.

While the growth of militancy and class-consciousness among French Canadian industrial workers was, until recently, accomplished despite, and even in opposition to, the old nationalist values assiduously cultivated and propagated by the traditional middle-class elites, which had little relevance to the needs or aspirations of these industrialized masses crowded together in the cities and towns, the nationalism of these proletarianized elites has given a new dynamism to the workers' struggle.

At the same time, however, the new middle class-inspired nationalism has imparted an unusual dynamism to leading sectors of the French-Canadian bourgeoisie, which is now manifesting some of the characeristics of the 19th ecntury European capitalist classes. In I960, the new middle classes of French-Canada temporarily found themselves allied with that bourgeoisie behind the Liberal party of Jean Lesage and René Lévesque.

For the Quebec business interests, the Liberals' "quiet revolution" projected a more or less consciously-planned quasi-capitalist (or 'neo-capitalist') conception of economic policy which, while basing itself on capitalist property relations, projects a greatly enlarged intervention of the provincial capitalist state of Quebec in the economy. The role of the neo-capital state is primarily to rationalize the operation of the local production industries within the ensemble of Quebec Industry. The State, according to this conception," is to be the means of the economic "emancipation" and "flowering" ("epanouissement") of the French-Canadian bourgeoisie, which by itself cannot hope to improve its position in the economy. For large layers of the new middle class, the projected "quiet revolution" opened up new possibilities for the promotion and growth of influence of French-Canadians within the industrial and financial hierarchy. Insofar as the Liberal party promised reforms within the context of Quebec's incomplete bourgeois framework, it received support from all classes of the population.

Although it differs in certain key respects from the "normal" neo-capitalist economy as It has developed in western Europe since the Second World War, the economic strategy of the Quebec Liberal government can be — and is — classified as such by its leading proponents, largely on the basis of its conception of the State as the active initiator and principal component in the province's economic development. It differs from classical Keynesian economic concepts; too, in its appeal to nationalist-based arguments in defense of even partial economic autarchy.

(... .The major objectives and components of the Lesage government's strategy ...)

Far from seeking to establish the French-Canadian bourgeoisie as a **competitor** of foreign capital and established business interests, however, Lesage's "neo-capitalism" is intended rather to **complement** the existing pattern of capitalist investment in Quebec. Thus, U.S. capital is ***not*** unduly concerned about the possible repercussions of the Quiet Revolution. Only Hydro nationalization (of the electric power subsidiaries of U.S. owned pulp and paper companies) aroused indignation in these quarters. But American and other foreign capital continues to flow into the province.

Precisely because it does not seek to change the basic pattern of capitalist ownership, to violate the operation of the law of value, the Lesage government does not attack the real base of Quebec's national problem. At most it seeks only to insert the French-Canadian bourgeoisie into the interstices of international capital's operations in this province. But it cannot break out of the circle of capital investment using capitalist methods. In fact, its extensive borrowing on the U.S. capital and bond market has enormously increased the direct reliance of the Quebec government upon U.S. imperialism. Quebec is today of all Canadian regions, the one most vulnerable to changes or fluctuations in U.S. investment policies, or temporary imbalances in the American business cycle (recessions). It is no coincidence that the most violent reaction to the recent statement of American government "guidelines" on foreign investment policies of their subsidiaries came from Quebec government spokesmen.

Even the partial implementation of its projected program, however, requires considerably greater expenditures on the part of the Quebec government. For example, three provincial responsibilities key to the realization of these policies — education, welfare., and roads, — were all rudimentary or unknown at the time of the BNA Act. Today they constitute together at least 60 per cent of all provincial expenditures. And because the Etat du Québec, within the fiscal restrictions imposed by Confederation, is perpetually starved of funds to carry out even the most elementary neo-capitalist reforms the national question has been drastically aggravated on the constitutional plane.

According to the basic premises of the Canadian constitution, Quebec has no special status; it is simply one province in ten, enjoying at best only limited powers restricted to certain almost exclusively provincial spheres. The federal government has the residuary power and it has in fact increasingly intruded on provincial jurisdiction. Although direct taxation is supposedly a provincial priority, Ottawa collects about four times as much in direct taxes in Quebec alone, as does Quebec. Ottawa takes about 60 per cent of the total amount of indirect taxation collected in Quebec. And Quebec (like all provinces) is forbidden to levy corporation taxes.

In addition, Quebec, as one of the "richer" provinces, is subsidizing some of the "poorer" English-Canadian provinces. In a typical budget year (1961-2), federal government subsidies to the provinces amounted to a total of 23.5 million dollars. Quebec received only I6.5 per cent of this amount, although its population is close to 30 per cent of the Canadian total. Many federal government expenditures, financed in large part by taxation in Quebec, have little relevance to Quebec and the French-Canadian nation. Some examples: federal aid to the western provinces ($112.5 million in 1961-2); immigration and citizenship ($66.1 million although only 2 per cent of all immigration into Canada is from the French-speaking countries); the public debt of accumulated federal deficits, a large part of which is assumed by Quebec, although French-Canadian MP's lack sufficient numbers to veto or unilaterally adopt any legislation at Ottawa. Then there is the CBC (which is far more English than French *['Radio-Canada' across Canada -- Ed.]*; the RCMP (Quebec has its own police force); the Senate, which doesn't represent the provinces, but only that famous minority, "the rich"; the federal Civil Service Commission, composed over 90 per cent of English-Canadian personnel; not to mention the departments of defense production and "national defence", the biggest single expenditure of the federal government. French-Canada has never supported the keystones of Canadian post-war defense strategy — NATO and NORAD — and its attitude toward conscription during the First and Second Imperialist Wars is well known. Only 8 per cent of the higher ranks of the army are French-Canadians, and even lower percentages are found in the Navy and Air Force.

Although all these points — and others — are made by the nationalist critics of Confederation, many of them are being echoed today by leading spokesmen of the Quebec government, who also point to the ever-increasing number of intrusions in expenditures and legislation by Ottawa, into fields where even the BNA Act itself granted specific jurisdiction to the provinces (examples are the administration and ownership of forests, the department of labour, the mines and technical surveys dept., aid to municipalities [$24.7 million in 1961-2] and universities [$19.4 million], health subsidies, hospitalization insurance and family allowances -- this last allowed by constitutional amendment, and which Quebec now wants to "repatriate").

This is not to say that Quebec would have instituted comparable social welfare measures on its own initiative -- years ago in fact it didn't ry, nor had it any desire to do so, under previous regimes — but precisely because the French-Canadian bourgeoisie is belatedly showing signs of behaving like ... a national bourgeoisie, in undertaking significant projects in social welfare and capitalist rationalization, it is now seeking to reverse the wholly normal past trend of the Canadian capitalist state toward an ever-greater centralization of powers. And, inevitably, it must base the case for its own control over such expenditures in Quebec on — the national character of French Canada.

For the French-Canadian bourgeoisie, the national question is one of overriding importance: not only does Lesage attempt to excuse inaction in certain spheres of his responsibilities, by claiming constitutional "blocage" but in fact, the Quebec Liberal government's crucial necessity to find new revenue sources to finance its reforms, without making serious inroads upon private and foreign capital investment in the province, adds another essential ingredient to the neo-capitalist reform platform: a fundamental revision of the Canadian constituion and fiscal sharing arrangements. The theoreticians of the Quiet Revolution differ among themselves on the extent of such reform. The most radical position is that associated with René Lévesque (although he was not

the first to advocate it) — the formation of Associate States, French and English — in which the Quebec "state" would possess all powers necessary to it as the "patrie" *('homeland')* of French-Canada, and the jurisdictions of the central government would be restricted to common requirements of the two states as these might be determined by common consent (e.g., defense, post-office, issuing of money). Residua] power would be vested in the respective states.

Although it is unlikely that the French-Canadian capitalist class will prove so aggressive, nor the English Canadian capitalist regime, so inflexible, that the Associate State idea will become future practice, Quebec is indeed moving toward increasing control over a wide range of powers traditionally regarded as federal prerogatives. Not only is this to be observed in the fields of education grants and social assistance plans (e.g., demands to "opt out" of specific federal projects) the Quebec government will soon initiate separate trade treatires with certain European states. Moves toward a certain measure of provincial tariff control are not ruled out. But although the French-Canadian bourgeoisie wants radical concession(s) in constitutional powers, it is not oriented toward the creation of a separate state, nor do its real interests like in that direction *(as a 'bourgeoisie' but, in the next few years, they were subsequently taking the initiative by planing a leading role in Quebec in the creation of an new independantist party, the Parti Québécois -- Ed.)*

But the quiet "revolution" of Lesage's Liberals is only one aspect of the new Quebec reality. A more important ingredient of that reality is the growing polarization of French-Canadian society, and the growth of opposition — of potential and actual anti-capitalist forces. One of the most radical sectors of contemporary Quebec society is the farming population.

(Note however the 1966 period emphasis by the nationalist left generally on the role of the Québécois petite-bourgeoisie -- reflected in the later documents of this website's collection. The division in the ranks of the significant but limited Québécois "grande-bourgeoisie" is evidenced by the staunch federalism --anti-Quebec sovereigntist-- views propagated the major dailies La Presse, Journal de Montréal*, etc., including also the left-wing neutral stance of influential* Le Devoir *--Ed.)*

The militancy of Quebec's farmers is in many ways analogous with that of the western wheat farmers 30 or 40 years ago. One and a half years ago, they marched 15 to 20-thousand strong on the provincial legislature to back up their demands for lower taxes and higher product prices. Last summer, they blocked highways in the Saguenay region to draw attention to their plight. The Union Catholique des Cultivateurs (UCC) — the powerful Catholic Farmers' Union -- has threatened to carry out civil disobedience through massive sitdowns inside the Legislative Assembly if its demands are not met. The angry farmers have formed the backbone of the province's Social Credit support, which is to them a radical form of protest (just as it was in Alberta in 1935).

It is not hard to find the reasons for this militancy. More than one-third of Quebec's impoverished farming operations are classified as small-scale or intermittent; they do not provide subsistence to their owners. Only 40% yield an annual cash income of $2500 per annum or more. While in Canada as a whole, the number of farms declined between 1950 and 1960 by l6%, in Quebec a decline of 21.9% (26,840 farms) was experienced between 1956 and 1961 alone. Each year it is estimated 6 to 7 per cent of remaining farmers 1eave to take up residence in the cities; two-thirds of the original colonizers in the Lac St-Jean and Gaspesie regions have abandoned their operations. In 1931, close to *30%* of the Quebec population lived on farms; now it is less than 9 per cent. Farmers account for a scant *6%* of the total Quebec labor force. In 1938, agriculture contributed 12.*3%* of the net value of other production in the province; by I960, that proportion had shrunk to 5.7%.

(... more detail on the farm crisis)

The decreasing importance of farmers and farming operations in the Quebec economy, as well as the declining weight of the rural and farm population in the Quebec labor force as a whole, means that the militancy of Quebec farmers (and of the UCC) does not translate into a demand for a unique farmers' party, as it did in the Canadian west some years ago. The farmers cannot possibly play a viable independant political role. In addition, almost total absence in Quebec of big exploiting farmers producing mainly for the market, as well as the fact that about one-third or more of the farmers are already semi-proletarianized through working for the paper companies and fisheries, means that it is difficult for the question of commodity prices to be used as a wedge between the workers and farmers. The class struggle has already been carried into the country. Conditions are already favorable for a farmer-labor alliance under labor's leadership. In fact, the UCC itself, through resolutions of its congresses and speeches of its leading spokesmen, appears quite cognizant of these possibilities. Already it is collaborating actively with the two labor federations in various projects such as the presentation of joint briefs to the government, etc.

At the turn of the century, soon after commencing its first major wave of industrilization, Quebec's population was 60% rural. By 1921, at the end of that period of development, a majority of its population was already urban. By 1931, 63% of the people lived in towns and cities. Thus Quebec has for some time been a predominantly urban society.

(end of part 2 of 3)

QUEBEC by R. Brock (D.F.)

(Part 3 of 3, page 25 original mimeo'd March 1966 LSO document -- Ed.)

(...)

During the depression and war years *(1939-1945)* urbanization slowed to a trickle, and there was even a certain movement back to the land. By 1951 the urban population had registered only a four per cent increase over its 1931 share. Since then, however, the urban population has increased until now close to 80 per cent of Quebec's population lives in cities or towns of over 1000 people (and over 50 per cent in towns of over 100,000).

This powerful urban influx reflects a considerable growth in the labor force registered in recent years. Between 1951 and 1963 alone, farm labor declined by 32 per cent, while the labor force in general increased by over 25 per cent. This remarkable increase, coupled with a relatively high turnover in the labor force by sectors, means that Quebec labor is young, largely inexperienced, and markedly free of established traditions of' organization and struggle.

This does not mean that the general development of the Quebec labor force is particularly different from that of the Canadian labor force as a whole. In fact, a generally similar pattern of growth, both in absolute measures, and by industrial sectors, can be observed for the ensemble of Canada.

But what does distinguish Quebec labor from its English-Canadian counterpart is the rapid growth of its organizations — the trade unions — in recent years.

Quebec trade unionism has known four distinct periods in its development. Its initial growth was hampered by the province's geographical isolation from the main centres of trade unionism in Ontario and the United States, by its lack of industrial development, and mainly of course, by linguistic and cultural barriers. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, unionism developed slowly, principally as the tail end of the entry of A.F. of L. and Knights of Labor unions *(American Federation of Labor narrow "craft" single-trade unions in contrast to the broader "industrial" multi-trade unions of the Knights, who in the short years of their functioning, had disappeared by the time of the Duplessis and McCarthy witch-hunts of the early 1950s --Web Ed.), (a similar development to the)* unions in more developed Ontario. By 1900, Quebec boasted only 151 locals, Ontario 547.

The second period is marked by an increase in Quebec's further isolation from the mainstream of North American trade unionism. It begins with the 1902 Canadian Trades and Labour Congress expulsion of the Knights of Labor locals, following the AF of L's earlier example in the United States. Of the 22 unions excluded from *(craft-union federation)* CTLC, 12 were from Montreal, and 5 from Quebec *(City)*. In fact, the Knights of Labor were to continue in existence longest in Quebec: insofar as Quebec labor in this period developed a 'tradition'; it has been remarked, it was a tradition opposed to business unionism *(in the U.S. "Gompers" style in which union chiefs made peace with business and avoided strikes at all cost --Web Ed.),* as exemplified even in that day by the AF of L unions. Soon after, the first Catholic unions, capitalizing on the new "social doctrine"of the Church *(overwhelmingly Catholic -- Web Ed.)*, developed out of the Knights of Labor remnants which thereby became markedly more conservatized. By 1921 when the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour (CTCC) was founded, these unions comprised 26,000 members. Meanwhile, however, a new wave of American unions sank roots in Quebec *(introducing the "industrial" CIO unions--ed.)*, coinciding with the entry of large-scale U.S.-owned industry. By 1936, the Catholic syndicats accounted for 45,000 Quebec workers, the "Internationals" almost 41,000, independent Canadian unions affiliated or not with the CTCC, 4,000. No more than 10 per cent of Quebec wage earners were yet organized.

Many of these Catholic syndicats, however, were little more than sophisticated company unions. With the exception of the pulp and paper Industry, the CTCC was generally confined to the localized small-scale industries, where it tended to collaborate closely with the paternalistic French-Canadian capitalists in maintaining low wage rates and the most backward working conditions. Carefully fostered by the *(Catholic)* Church and local business interests, it developed not out of the dynamic of the class struggle, but in opposition to that struggle, in opposition to the growing influence of non-clerical (American) trade unionism. The obscurantist nationalism of these religious, political and business elites provided the essential ideological cement for this coalition. In an often quoted statement, CTCC founder and long-time president Alfred Charpentier, a former activist in the International trade unions, expressed very clearly the content of this nationalism when he wrote to nationalist leader Henri Bourassa in 1916:

"After reading your book, *Hier, Au'jourd'hui, Demain,* I wondered to what extent the Canadian trade union organizations could support nationalism. After some reflection, I came to think that the present international Trade Union movement constitutes a strong impediment to the diffusion of nationalist ideas among the Working classes; consequently, my still recent conviction that trade unionism in this country must definitely become really Canadian was strengthened. Actually, the more I study nationalism, the more I realize the necessity for all national forces to collaborate in the collective task of reviving our old traditional policy and assuring its natural development until the independence of our country. But I acknowledge that, for a long, time, I could not see that among these forces in this country there is one particularly that is anti-national and that threatens to become so increasingly — this is our international and exclusively American trade unionism... However, far be it from me to claim that our Canadian unions must entirely renounce the international principle; but I support the essential idea that it is necessary that they learn to espouse a more patriotic point of view and to serve only under the influence and with the spirit of patriotism" (from *Ma Conversion au Syndicalisme Catholique,* 1946, Montréal , pp. 54-55 *(demonstrating the conservative nature of church-dominated Québéois nationalism at that stage -- of rural rather than urban proletarian outlook --Ed.)*

Precisely because the French-Canadian bourgeoisie is most dependent upon the continued maintenance of low wage industries, it fought with increasing ferocity the growing influence of the international unions. Nevertheless, the internationals, far from declining in influence and numbers, actually provided the principal impetus behind the province's third wave of trade union organization, which began just before the Second World War with the entry of the CIO unions *(U.S.-based Congress of Industrial Unions -- the mass "industrial" multi-craft unions --ed.)* into Quebec through the Canadian Congress of Labour. By 1941, largely under the impulsion of the CCL industrial unions, trade union membership had increased to 120,000, and by 1946, the war-time influx had raised the number to over 200,000. The CTCC registered no growth during this period; by 1943, when it finally took the first steps toward deconfessionalization, it represented only 28 per cent of total Quebec trade union membership. Both the CCL and the AFL-affiliated Trades and Labor Congress gained at the expense of the Catholic unions. Thus, by 1951, when 32 per cent — 260,000 — of Quebec's wage earners were organized, the TLC accounted for 40 per cent of them, the CCL for 20 per cent, and the CTCC had increased its share only slightly to 34 per cent.

By 1961 and the beginning of the fourth and most recent period in Quebec labor history, just over 300,00 workers were organized, about two-thirds of them associated with the Quebec Federation of Labor (affiliated in turn to the Canadian Labor Congress), 90,000 in the now thoroughly deconfessionalized successor of the CTCC, the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU) *(CSN-Conseil des Syndicaux Nationals)*, and the remainder in independent (company) unions, of which there are a considerable number in Quebec. Since the war, there had been a steady trend toward closer ties between the "International" unions and their Quebec sections; a trend particularly strengthened by the merger of the Canadian craft and industrial unions in 1956 *(the "AF of L-CIO").* A majority of the Quebec international unions formed the QF of L at the same time *(Quebec Federation of Labor - Fédération des Travailleurs du Québec-FTQ --ed.)*

Since 1961, the CSN has nearly doubled its membership, growing to over 155,000 to which must be added the 30,000 provincial civil servants who will soon affiliate directly to the federation which organized them. One-third of this increase was registered in 1964 alone. Does the growth of this "national" labor federation signify, as some have suggested, a new trend among French-Canadian workers away from the international unions, and in favor of an an autonomous Quebec labor movement?

There is no clear evidence suggesting such a trend. The "rival" QFL of the international unions has itself been recruiting wide layers of hitherto unorganized workers. During 1965 it, too, gained 40,000 new members. Although the mutual "raiding" between the two federations has attracted much attention, the CSN has wooed only 10,000 workers away from the QFL, most of them in 1964; in 1965, the CSN gained only 520 recruits in this way. In fact, those workers who have quit their international affiliations to adhere to the CSN do so in protest, not against the principle of international trade unionism, but rather against abuses of that principle by the arrogant and bureaucratic "international" leaderships — that is, in protest against their **lack** of internationalism. The CSN has capitalized on this anti-bureaucratic feeling within the ranks not because it is more militant — it isn't — (*but it taps directly into native independentist militacy -- Web Ed.)* but essentially because it is a conveniently alternative federation, which promises a more democratic structure and internal life. The thousands of industrial workers who have recently adhered to the CSN represent some of the most militant sectors -- the bus-drivers, dockworkers, etc. But, for even these militants, there is in general no clear principled choice between the CSN and FTQ. Thus, votes among hitherto unorganized workers, as at the Shawinigan Power division of Hydro-Québec, when won by the CSN, are carried by the narrowest of majorities. And it should be noted that one of the most militant sectors — the Montreal postal employees — affiliated recently not to the CSN but to the QFL. In fact, from no point of abstract "principle" can the CSN be considered "better" than the QFL. Barring special circumstances, it would be a serious mistake for class-struggle militants to give either federation even critical support against the other.

Nevertheless, the CSN's proportionately greater increase in numbers over the QFL of late, can be attributed in part to its relatively greater success in organizing professional and white collar office and highly skilled strata. These elements are also much more national conscious than the average industrial worker, who seldom has profound illusions about his opportunities for advancement. Generally, the extent to which national resentment is experienced is directly proportional to the degree of skill of the individual labourer. The lowest in the industrial hierarchy never get to meet the English-speaking boss or management personnel (*however, these unskilled workers do meet their bosses' foremen on a very intimate basis as anyone who has worked on a shop floor can attest -- Ed.)*

The CSN is remarkably well situated to capitalize on the extension of trade union organization to the new middle class layers of French-Canadian society. Its structures are highly centralized for effective action on a province-wide scale, yet sufficiently flexible to allow the affiliation of, for example, school-teachers' federations which wish to retain something of their old professional character. Many of its dynamic young leading figures and organizers issue from the same milieu -- the social science faculties of the universities; it was they who led the campaign to de-confessionalize the federation during the 1940s and '50s, and who rose quickly through the ranks in the wake of the old cadres of discredited collaborationist bureaucrats, abandoned almost entirely in the period following the militant Asbestos strike of 1948-49. And it is this leadership which has made the national question a point of principle in their critique of the CLC unions. Witness former CSN president Jean Marchand's statements on "foreign" institutions: "I am not a racist... but it must be said that our principal institutions have come to us from outside: we took our parliament from England, our economic structures from the United States, our Church from Rome... It's about time that we built **our own** institutions." During the successful campaign to win the Montreal bus drivers from the CBRT (a wholly-Canadian (*largely rail-workers')* union), he declared, "Even if the Steelworkers and the CBRT were very fine unions, I would tell you to create your own trade unions."

Among the mass of the workers, however, there does not appear to be any profound rejection of the international unions as such. Within these unions there is, though, a powerful rank-and-file movement for greater autonomy of their Quebec sections. This movement, which is gaining momentum and support, is primarily a reflection of the stepped-up tempo of the Quebec class struggle in recent years. The growing sharpness of that struggle has been manifested in many ways, most notably by the successful organizing campaigns, and the large number of wildcat strikes — particularly in the vulnerable public services (Liquor Board, Postal workers, Port employees, Hydro engineers and office workers, school-teachers, etc.) Also, because of its lack of established traditions of struggle, the militancy of Quebec Labor can take the most diverse forms of expression. Direct action comes more readily to French-Canadian workers. The "kidnapping" of Labor Minister Carrier Fortin at Manicouagan, and the ravage of' company property in the course of organizing the construction trades, are just two recent instances.

The most recent convention of the Quebec Federation of Labor saw the appearance of an organized "nationalist caucus", enjoying the support of almost half the delegates, and composed of most of the QFL's leading militants. Many of them had been active in the formation of the Parti Socialiste du Québec. This caucus, while "opposed to any relaxation of the ties between Canadian and international unions", projects the eventual organic fusion of the CSN and QFL in a united and autonomous Quebec labor federation with complete control over all its affairs, maintaining close ties of a fraternal character with their confreres in English-Canada, the United States, and around the world. These QFL militants correctly reject the subjugation of any Quebec union to the executive veto of a higher authority across the Quebec border. Such a veto, in the present circumstances of Quebec's social ferment can only be a conservatising factor.

The pattern of current militancy suggests that there is little likelihood of nationalist sentiment in the trade union movement translating into even critical support of the French-Canadian bourgeoisie vis-à-vis the English-Canadian and American bosses. The most militant and hard-fought of recent strikes and lockouts have been conducted against representatives of the "national" capitalist class — eg. at *(the Montreal daily) La Presse,* Dupuis Freres, Standard Paper Box, La Grenade shoes, Simard, Pierre Bruneile (garbage collection), as well as among the provincial public employees — teachers, bus-drivers, liquor board employees, Hydro engineers and office employees, etc. This is no coincidence, for the French-Canadian bourgeoisie is generally confined to the lower-wage industries. Significantly, almost all the industrial conflicts referred to above, as well as many others, have been led by the former Catholic syndicats — now the CSN — which (as already mentioned) have by tradition established their principal bases of support in these sectors of industry. Far from initiating this rank and file militancy, the CSN leaders have really only *capitalized* on the greater unrest among workers in these sectors. But the extent of that unrest makes it clear that *class* consciousness is growing among French-Canadian workers *(here the author attempts to draw a line of distinction between class and national militancy, while he elsewhere demonstrates their confluence-- Ed.)*

Perhaps the most remarkable indication to this point of the increasing tempo of Quebec's new radicalism is to be found among the students. Traditionally, the students constitute that sector of society most sensitive to changes in the social milieu; they are the most open to new ideas, and the least committed to the continuation of the system which reared them. Quebec's students are no exception. In recent years, they have marched on Quebec *(City, the capital --ed.)* 4,000 strong to demand free university education and a "new social policy"; they have struck the University of Montreal to demand "co-management" of the institution with the board of governors; and their most consistently radical formation, the General Students' Association of the University of Montreal (AGEUM) has instructed its official organ, *Le Quartier Latin* to carry a "nationalist and socialist" orientation.

The AGEUM was the leading force behind the formation in 1964 of the Union Générale des Etudiants du Québec (UGEQ), a 75,000-member student syndicat embracing most of the province's University, Classical College and arts and technical school students. UGEQ has gone beyond the

traditional student issues to identify with international issues such as the Vietnam revolutionary war, and it has more and more solidarized the French-Canadian student milieu with the labor movement. Recently, for example, it has sponsored mass picket lines in solidarity with striking workers in Montreal. UGEQ theoreticians have even endeavoured to define students, with good intentions if misused terminology, as "intellectual workers". Even the English-language students in Montreal have been caught up to some degree in this infectious enthusiasm — the students' councils of the four English universities and colleges opted for UGEQ membership, even though this meant accepting French unilingualism within the syndicat and breaking from the English Canadian Union of Students. Their decision, when put to a vote, was defeated by orly a slim margin by the McGill student body.

Separatism probably enjoys its greatest support among the students. Symptomatic of this, the memorandum to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Culturalism, of the Presse Etudiante Nationale (PEN), which represents more than 100 French-language student publications in Quebec, called for Quebec's separation from Canada. It is doubtful that a majority of the Quebec student population, although nationalist, is distinctly separatist. *(By the 1970s, the author would recognize the overwhelming sovereigntist sentiment of the student youth in Quebec -- Ed.)* However, it is clear that most of the student leaders are *(for separation),* and they are not opposed by other students on this account.

Finally, the developing ferment in Quebec has witnessed the rise of a new left, which has come to socialism, primarily through its consciousness and understanding of the national question. A whole plethora of such movements has sprung up in the last two years or so *(1964-1966).* Probably the best known -- and most developed politically -- is the Mouvement de Libération Populaire (MLP), which grew out of the periphery attached to the popular (5000 circulation) review: *parti pris,* and to which have adhered recently a number of smaller lesser-known groups.

The main impulsion behind this new left has been the students. Inspired by the colonial revolution, particularly as it unfolded in Algeria and Cuba, they have related the experiences of Quebec to those of the "Third World." Most of them regard some sort of "national revolution" to be led or supported by the French-Canadian bourgeoisie, as an integral part, if not a necessary pre-condition of the Quebec socialist revolution. To the extent that they have come to an understanding of that class's inability and lack of desire, to carry out any sort of revolution — national or otherwise — they have been led to polemics with the purely separatist movement, which maintains a far more categorical position on the "national revolution" as a stage-in-itself. The "new left" elements in Quebec are distinguished above all by the fact that they do not foresee a purely capitalist solution of the national problem -- a problem which is itself the product of capitalist exploitation.

This French-Canadian student and youth "new left" differs from the American anti-war left or the British New Left in other ways, too. Like them, they reject "'social democracy." The New Democratic party has shown them 1ittle more than opportunism and parliamentary cretinism heavily overlain with crude anti-French chauvinism. And they reject Stalinism, for many of them are surprisingly well acquainted with its treacherous role in Algeria and Cuba, and their experiences with the CP *(pro-Moscow Canadian Communist Party)* in Quebec itself in the Vietnam anti-war fronts, etc., have simply concretized their knowledge of its reformist line. The best elements have a fairly clear understanding of the pitfalls of the CP's popular frontist maneouvres. But -- here their careful reading of the colonial revolution has stood them in good stead — a considerable number of them have accepted Marxism-Leninism as the only relevant and consistent revolutionary theory for our times. (In fact, they reject the CP precisely because it is neither revolutionary nor — Marxist-Leninist.) Their understanding of Marxism and Leninism has, however, in many instances, been strongly colored by the interpretations of it passed off by ideologues of the European non-Marxist left such as Sartre, Gorz, Berque, etc.

Their most important difference with the "traditonal" North American new left, however, is that they are already seeing the working class of Quebec in action, and in very militant action on the economic plane o[r] struggle. Thus, it is not difficult for them to impute the leading role in the coming Quebec revolution to the working class. In fact, their remaining equivocation on the question of which

class will lead even the national revolution, derives in large part only from the Quebec labor movement's failure to this point to give a political expression to its militancy.

But for all its talk of orienting to the working class, this new left still remains isolated from the mass of Quebec workers. It is a small left — the largest "new left" tendency, the MLP, has at most only a few hundred members, and far fewer activists. And the inexperience and naivete of many of its militants lends a certain touch of unreality, yet freshness, to its debates. Where else in North America are guerilla warfare, underground organization and action, and the desirability of participating in elections and bourgeois parliaments, considered key questions of discussion in left-wing circles? Like the organized French-Canadian working class in general the new Quebec left has a brief history, without tradition, marked neither by significant defeats nor major victories.

The isolation of the French-Canadian left-wing forces from the working class underlines the unfortunate paradox of the Quebec labor movement: that is, that while it is the most militant in North America, it is also the most apolitical in Canada. Why has there not yet come, out of all the developing ferment in French-Canadian society, a mass movement capable of mobilizing the workers, farmers, and students in a political vehicle independent of the capitalist parties? Such a party would be a valuable step along the road toward the mass revolutionary party projected by the revolutionary youth of the MLP and other movements. For the most important step ahead for Quebec workers and farmers is to build their own party. The initiative for such a development must come from within the unions.

Why **is** there no labor party in Quebec? To answer this question, it is useful to examine why there is a labor party — the New Democratic Party — in English Canada. It is **not** because of any strong demand in the ranks, but because the trade union bureaucracy, for a number of reasons saw itself obliged to move out into independent political action to preserve its own base. Among these reasons were the wave of anti-labor legislation in the 1950s, particularly in Newfoundland, British Columbia, and Ontario; the severe diminution of the CC F 's parliamentary representation; *(CCF: Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, 1933-1961 precursor of the NDP --ed.)* and the generally small size of the opposition in parliament to the massive Tory majority, following the 1958 federal election. The labor bureaucracy felt it no longer had room to manoeuver within the framework of established capitalist party politics.

But the CLC bureaucrats had no intention, even then, of creating a **labor** party as such. Rather, they advocated the formation of some sort of Liberal-labor coalition, a regroupment of class forces on the political plane. Labor was simply to be a component part of this regroupment, which would supposedly split the "left wing" of the Liberal party from its parent, effecting a new polarization in the parliamentary arena.

In Quebec, on the other hand, the leading labor bureaucrats of both CSN and QFL still see room to maneuver within the framework of the "Quiet Revolution" and traditional party politics. This, despite the recent spate of anti-labor legislation by the Lesage government. The reason for this can be found in the already-analyzed duality of the Liberal party's labor policy in the global sense. The two essentially complementary, but different, sides to that policy — the carrot and the stick — highlight, for example, the recent cabinet shuffles. At the same time as it consciously moves to implement a "hard line" on civil rights and political opposition (e.g., *[Liberal Minister Claude]* Wagner), the regime moves the reformers Lévesque and Kierans, the two most "popular" ministers, to the Welfare and Health portfolios respectively. A compulsory and universal medicare plan is implicitly promised in the not-too-distant future. Every so often, too, Lévesque sounds off at the universally-disliked Noranda Mines, or unleashes verbal volleys at the "rich bourgeois" of Westmount. The naive and easily satisfied continue to expect great accomplishments from Lesage's liberal government. In their vanguard are — or at least were, until recently — the labor bureaucrats. And their views are reflected in those of the Quebec NDP leadership.

Then, too, the long years of the defensive struggle against Duplessism created an exceptionally intimidated trade union leadership, whose interests socially and even personally became allied to a considerable degree with the parliamentary opposition party of the day, the Liberals.

Nor is there any tradition of labor political action in Quebec, unlike English Canada where the Chartist-inspired British labor movement, through the influenceof immigrants, played a role of inordinate importance on the development of political forms of struggle.

Add to this the absence of a deep-rooted parliamentary tradition in French Canada -- where, it must be remembered, parliament is yet another in a long line of "foreign" institutions introduced by the British -- plus a general distrust of political parties and the notoriously corrupt electoral machines — in short, the "system" — and it is easy to see why French Canadian workers are less inclined to look to party politics as they know it as an effective means of struggle. These reasons just cited also suggest of course, that a Quebec labor party, once formed, would have its' own, unique, tempo of development.

Another factor inhibiting independent labor political action is the division of the labor movement between the QFL and the CSN. The QFL, which is affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress, and has at least verbally supported :the federal NDP, has consistently predicated a turn toward political action, on the provincial level on prior agreement by the more conservative pro-Liberal 'top' leadership of the CSN.

As a result, the Quebec arm of the NDP has never been solidly organized. Organizationally, at present, it is dominated by three major elements: the English radicals in Montreal; the QFL bureaucracy, which abstains from leading posts in the party, but provides it with money; and a comparatively small group of French-Canadian social-democrats, who for the most part are violently anti-nationalist, and who tend to support on the provincial plane the more uninhibited wing of the Liberal party (Lévesque et al.) In both form and content, the Quebec NDP is analogous to the 'old' CCF in English Canada (particularly after the formal expression of support by the CCL in 1943).

The party is repeatedly compromised by the positions of its federal leadership on many of the major issues (eg, their support of NATO). This is even truer with regard to the Quebec question, where the party's formal recognition of Canada's two-nation character and the right of the French-speaking nation to self-determination (this latter position surrepitiously dumped at the recent federal convention) is largely undercut by its ignorant stances on day-to-day issues. The idiocies of a Douglas Fisher *(a flamboyant ex-Liberal personality and NDP-MP then offering unsolicited policy advice to the NDP --ed.)* are not easily forgotten by French-Canadians. Even "left--wing" reformists like Colin Cameron — who was recently quoted as declaring that "any revision of Canada's constitution, the BNA Act, must preserve the existing basic relations between Quebec and the central government" — have revealed a marked incapacity to identify with even middle-class political opinion in Quebec. It was mainly because they could see little possibility of viable work within this federal NDP context, that a considerable number of new party forces in Quebec opted in 1963 for the formation of an autonomous Quebec party *(Quebec wing of the NDP -- le Nouveau Parti Démocratique -- subsequently abandoned by the federal party's leadership over their inability to deal with the national question in Quebec -- Ed).*

At the time of its creation the Parti Socialiste du Québec appeared to be the vehicle, the formula, which could unite the young revolutionary left, the older cadres of long-time social-democrats and ex- CPers, and the politicized trade unionists in a party with the potential of becoming the formal political arm of the Quebec labor movement. Independent of the NDP's Douglas-Lewis leadership, it contained many of the to secondary leadership of the trade unions, both FTQ and CSN (it is said that of the 300 or so signed-up members at the time of its founding, no less than 72 were full-time union functionaries.) In addition, the leading "intellectuals" of the Quebec CCF-NDP gave it their support. It seemed only a question of time — and not much time — before the party could build a mass base in the working class.

But the PSQ has never got off the ground. It failed to differentiate itself sufficiently from precisely those features of the NDP which had repelled many of the youthful revolutionary generation. Its program, a curious melange of radical social democracy coupled with a certain corporatist strain, was politically reminiscent of the CCF's "Regina Manifesto" of 1932. Radical as it was in the pan-Canadian cortext, it was not revolutionary -- and revolution is what these youth want. Nothing less could at that time hope to gain their commitment and active support. Then, too, the PSQ never did resolve the very problem on which it based its independent "raison d'être" — the national question. While some party militants favored a separatist option, others (the majority) advocated some sort of "associate state" status for Quebec.

Only a few considered the whole question ancillary to the program as a whole. But the party's bind on the question paralyzed its action, even leading to a split of the "national left" caucus less than four months after its foundation.

But the PSQ's lack of union support proved to be its major weakness. Although the NDP, by way of contrast, was organized without a mass agitation for a labor party in union ranks, it has been able to survive repeated castrations of its program, thanks to the support of the union apparatus, and through the tenacious adherence of numerous militants and CCF remnants. The PSQ had neither a base in the labor movement nor a politically-experienced cadre. Considered in this light, it was a **premature** development . *('Premature' undoubtedly because, while rooted in Quebec labor, and because it lacked experience of labor political action of the CCF and the NDP, and was tainted by that labor party's blind federalism -- leading to the detour to the sovereigntist Parti Québécois on the scene in the early 1970s -- *more detail on this point at conclusion from the Ed.)*

There are now indications that Quebec labor's attitude toward political, action is changing. The very considerable NDP vote on November *(8)* that encouraged the QFL congress the following month to commit itself in principle at least to action on the provincial level, although it still declines to fight the Liberals this year in the provincial election. And the QFL leadership still refuses to take the initiative in building a labor party without the CSN's support. In the CSN itself, however, a significant number of the secondary leadership — permanents, organizers, local chairmen, etc. — are known to favor a greater commitment of the federation to political education and action.

The potential for a labor party is obvious even now. The federal NDP's 242,000 votes on November 8th *(1965)* showed that support for the already-existing Canadian labor party is continuing to grow unabated, despite its all-too-frequent insesitivity to the national question, and despite its almost total lack of organization even in most areas of Montreal. In the metropolitan area itself, containing more than half of Quebec's labor force, the party's support has climbed steadily from the 68,000 votes (9.8 per cent of the popular vote) in 1962 to 95,000 (13 per cent) in 1963, and 134,000 votes (19.4 per cent) garnered in 1965. Apart from English ridings, the party's vote is strongest in areas inhabited by skilled or organized French-Canadian workers — particularly in the suburbs. (It should be noted that the separatists, among whom many elements would normally support a party with the basic program of the NDP — the RIN's program for example (is) essentially the same on most non-constitutional issues -- boycotted the last two federal elections. Their abstention or boycott should also be considered a radical — if misplaced -- demonstration of protest.)

It seems clear that a Quebec labor party must be — and will be — autonomous as to its structures and program. The militants of the QFL's nationalist caucus insist on this necessity, and the politicized elements in the CSN are in accord. The students and new left militants who can be expected to be active in this party will, of course, accept nothing less than full autonomy. There is no reason why the political arm of the Quebec workers and socialists should be subject to the veto of the English-Canadian majority in the NDP. Nor can the Quebec labor party be responsible for the chauvinistic blunders of the present NDP English-Canadian leadership. Only the establishment of independent control of the Quebec party by its members can, in fact, ensure the maintenance of the closest fraternal relations between the English and French Canadian left-wing mass movements at all times.

Quebec's economic and social backwardness, the diluted character of its internal class relations in the past, are a direct product of the national subordination and oppression of the French-Canadian people within the Canadian confederation. Defeated before it could enter the struggle, the French-Canadian bourgeoisie was forced to surrender the development of its territory to foreign capital, against which it could not hope to compete. But precisely because the province's economic development was the work of foreign-owned capital interests, which created over the years a large industrial proletariat and, indirectly, a powerful industrial trade union base, the new national consciousness of French Canada, coming at a time when capitalism on a world scale long ago exhausted any progressive potential, has fused with this powerful developed working class to give it a remarkable and unprecedented dynamism.

The absolute and strategic weakness of the French-Canadian bourgeoisie — its utter inability to replace, even if it wished to do so, the tremendous preponderance of imperialist interests in Quebec, makes impossible a purely capitalist solution of the national oppression of the French Canadian nation. The present inspiring developments in the farm, labor and student movements are not just, as some even on the left might pretend, a struggle for "democratic equality" with English-Canada; they are, in fact, the opening rounds in the struggle for socialism in Quebec. *(Emphasis by the Web Ed.)*

Insofar as the national question, in its normal expression, is a bourgeois question — that is, a remnant of the incomplete character of French Canada's bourgeois revolution, the failure of the capitalist class to wield dominant power in its own state — the resolution of the national tasks of the Quebec revolution must be taken up by the working class. The conjuncture of bourgeois and socialist tasks in Quebec today— its 'privilege of historical, backwardness' — presents the possibility for a number of "stages" in the normal course of capitalist development to be compressed or even "skipped". Thus, the French-Canadian bourgeoisie, having already outlived its usefulness as a class, shows little or no inclination -- still less, ability -- to establish a separate state. *(However, the author of this essay may wish to modify this prognosis in view of the development of the independentist movement subsequent to 1966. The possibility of a "cold independence" for Quebec prior to the establishment of genuine socialist independence has since become a reality; in which case, the class struggle will more and more take precedence over the national -- Ed.)*

But, for that very reason, still less does the struggle of the potential and actual anti-capitalist forces in French Canadian society — those classes with no stake in the continued existence of the capitalist system — orient toward separatism. Entire stages in the political development of, for example, the western European working classes, covering decades and even generations, may be for the Quebec workers assimilated and compressed into a few short years or even months. The startling growth of Quebec trade unions from the church-dominated company unionism of only 30 years ago, to the powerful, militant, and increasingly politicized labor movement of today; the growth of a militant farm movement which sees its interests closely allied with those of the organized labor movement; the upsurge of the mass student syndicats; and the growth of social consciousness among significant layers of the French-Canadian "middle classes"; and, not least, the increasing rejection of the medieval-like corporatist-inspired political ideologies which dominated Quebec only seven or eight years ago, for the budding socialist and revolutionary, movement of today, leading elements of which are already grappling with the most profound political ideas and theories of the epoch; in their basic outlook already deeply committed to revolutionary action — all this demonstrates the extent and depth of the "leaps" or qualitative, breaks, in the national and social consciousness of French-Canadians in recent years.

Although French Canada's struggle does not at present, and will not likely in the future, orient in its dominant tendencies toward the creation of a separate state, this does not in any way whatsoever detract from, the continuing importance of the national question in Quebec, nor does it negate the necessity to recognize the right to self-determination of the French-Canadian nation, including that part of the nation living in regions bordering the existing province of Quebec. Concretely, that right can have no other meaning than their right to separation, and the right of the French-Canadian nation — and **only** that nation -- to decide on the question.

English-Canadian socialists must struggle first and foremost against the chauvinism of their 'own' bourgeoisie, and for the right of French Canada to secede. They must show that English-Canadian workers are **indifferent** whether or not French Canada secedes from the Canadian confederation — for the English-Canadian working class, like that of French Canada, has **no stake whatsoever** in the existing Canadian capitalist state. At the same time, our French-Canadian comrades must struggle against anything that tends to erect divisions between the French and English-Canadian working classes. Dialectically, the comrades of both nations approach the same goal, internationalism. As Lenin, writing fifty years ago, put it:

"The proletariat of oppressor nations must not confine themselves to general, stereotyped phrases against annexation and in favour of the equality of nations in general such as are repeated by any pacifist bourgeois. The proletariat cannot remain silent on the question of the **frontiers** of a state founded on national oppression, a question so "unpleasant" for the imperialist bourgeoisie. The proletariat must struggle against the enforced retention of oppressed nations within the bounds of the given state, which means that they must fight for the right to self-determination. The proletariat must demand freedom of

political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by 'their own' nation. If the reverse were true, the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words, neither confidence nor class solidarity would be possible between the workers of the oppressed and the oppressor nations; the hypocrisy of the reformists and Kautskyites, who defend self-determination but remain silent about the nations oppressed by "their own" nation" and kept in "their own" state by force, would remain unexposed.

On the other hand, the Socialists of the oppressed nation must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organizational unity, of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation. Without this it is impossible to defend the independent policy of the proletariat and their class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries in face of all manner of intrigues, treachery and trickery on the part of the bourgeoisie In practice, the proletariat can retain its Independence only by subordinating its struggle for all democratic demands, not excluding the demand for a (separate) republic, to its revolutionary struggle for the overthrough of the bourgeoisie." —in *Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism,* ppl40-142.

The demand in favor of the right of self-determination of the French-Canadian nation has its own corollary: unlike the bourgeoisie, which presents its national demands categorically (for or against separatism, etc.) and places them in the forefront, the working class must approach the national question independently, with its own class interests uppermost. Thus, for our French-Canadian comrades, the question of the political independence of Quebec (or of the French-Canadian nation) cannot be decided on the basis of some abstracted absolute principle-in-itself. The criterion in determining our own specific approach to the demand for separation is whether or not that demand raises the class consciousness of the French-Canadian workers, and leads them forward in the struggle for socialism. But it is clear that in the specific context of the contemporary class struggle in Quebec, the demand for complete political separation only obscures the direction of that struggle.

The evolution of the struggle in Quebec provides an outstanding confirmation of the continuing validity of the theory of permanent revolution, the basic premise of which holds that in the epoch of imperialism, the developing revolution in a country with colonial characteristics cannot be indefinitely "stalled" at the bourgeois-democratic stage — the solution of the "national" tasks — but that it must inevitably pass over to the accomplishment of the socialist tasks, the expropriation of private capitalist holdings and their administration by the workers themselves through their own organs of rule. The most advanced elements in the new French-Canadian left have already developed an understanding of this theory. Their appreciation of the necessity to inject a socialist content and program into the national struggle, and to form a working class cadre capable of leading that struggle, has already led them to reject as inadequate both social democracy as they see it reflected in the NDP, and Stalinism, as it continues to be expressed in the Communist Party.

While the NDP, even in Quebec, hardly pretends to be socialist, it has moreover ignored and even violated the elementary defense of French Canada's national struggle. As for the CP, it treats that struggle as little more than a popular aspiration for "democratic equality" with English Canada. Its purely formal, recognition of French Canada's right to self-determination stands in subordinate opposition to its more general slogan "Put Canada First". And while the party's "theoreticians" have of late attempted to paper over the contradiction with a generalization of Lesage's old slogan: "Maîtres chez Nous" *('Become masters in our own house'),* the CP's morbid fear of separatism, which if effected would sabotage "Canadian independence," precludes an honest collaboration with the young revolutionary nationalists. So also does the CP's proposed "solution" of the national problem: the convocation of a "constituent assembly" to be composed of an equal number of representatives from **both** nations. But only French Canada can decide the question of its own fate.

Clearly, the potential is great for the growth and eventual hegemony of the revolutionary socialist, Trotskyist, forces in Quebec. Already, Trotskyism as a revolutionary current is highly respected, even respectable, among broad layers of the new revolutionary-oriented left. The major task facing our Quebec forces is to win these revolutionary youth, who have rejected both social democracy and Stalinism, to the program of the Fourth International, and, just as important, to the construction of the Quebec Trotskyist party. Currents such as that represented by the Mouvement de Libération Populaire must be

projected into the broad stream of the class struggle, into active work within the organized labor movement, and into the organized political expression of that movement, whatever its dominant ideology and program may be.

It seems evident that the Quebec labor movement is not prepared to adhere immediately to the mass revolutionary party projected by the MLP and others — although it is equally obvious that such a party must be constructed if the struggle for socialism in Quebec is to meet with ultimate success. It is probable that the organized French-Canadian workers, like their English-Canadian confreres, will pass through the experience of a labor party, even a labor party burdened, initially at least, with a reformist — and hence, inadequate — program and leadership. The revolutionaries must go through such an experience with them, and fight to build a socialist, revolutionary cadre within the mass movement. In the course of that struggle for a socialist program, programs and leaders will be tested under fire.*

Until that involvement in the mass movement, our own experiences with the new left currents and the class as a whole, as well as their experiences with us, will have only a limited, episodic and partial character, However, out of that experience, we are confident, there will emerge a revolutionary socialist cadre which, armed with its theory and experiences in the living process of the class struggle, and under the banner of the Fourth International, will go on to lead the Quebec socialist revolution, a revolution which will without doubt mark a major step forward towards the liquidation of capitalism on the North American continent and hence, throughout the world.

**(Note also that the author does not -- could not, at the time of writing -- discuss the role of the Quebec petite-bourgeoisie, with it's distinct and decidedly more dynamic political layers in Quebec society, which threw up the leadership of the Parti Québécois. This arose out of an ideological split in the governing bourgeois Quebec Liberal regime over the direction and depth of the 'Quiet Revolution." This first genuinely popular sovereigntist movement under the leadership of media star René Lévesque, economist Jacques Parizeau et cie., having encompassed existing radical sovereigntist student groups like 'parti pris' and the R.I.N. led by orator Pierre Bourgoult, led to the establishment of the Mouvement Souveraineté-Association [forerunner of the PQ) in collaboration with prominent Quebec labor leaders like Robert Burns who rode the wave of heightened worker protest with a vengeance. This aspect of the not-so-'Quiet Revolution' saw a flood of sovereigntist protest support not only from secondary labor ranks, but virtually the entire Quebec left to the PQ, strongly motivated by the spectacular exit/expulsion from the Liberal Party cabinet of Resources Minister Lévesque as a sovereigntist messiah. The MSA-PQ nationalist wave suceeded in establishing overnight one of the truest mass activist "labor" parties by rank-and-file composition in North America, eclipsing even the CCF and the NDP in their heydays in English Canada.*

However, from Day One the Lévesque leadership laid down its heavily pro-bourgeois "sovereignty-association" program -- perhaps even with a "comprador" element -- acting as faithful servants of foreign capital -- inasmuch as it hailed the coming of a "normal" [capitalist] Quebec society conserving English-Canadian and U.S. capitalism in Quebec and, in addition, actively curbing worker and student activism, denouncing their "excessive" demands such as French unilingualism -- the vital demand safeguarding a French Quebec with the national language dominant in the workplace and in education -- Ed.)